

the issues and events that affect their daily lives.

Through her work, Barbara Hawkins served as a teacher and a counselor, a defender of right and a pursuer of wrong, an advocate, a champion, and a friend to all in southern West Virginia.

Now, after three decades of service, Barbara has decided to retire from daily reporting. But, as much as we would expect, she is not giving up the art of writing and informing. Her columns and special projects will continue, allowing all of us to learn from her insights and her experiences.

Most of Barbara's work at the newspaper was in the public eye. But, more than anything else, Barbara's strength came from her deep devotion to her family. We have all walked the terrible journey with her after her daughter, Pam, was taken from this world, a victim of domestic violence more than 20 years ago. Barbara has never been shy about that loss nor about her efforts to prevent that shattering experience from touching other families. But what is not in the headlines is Barbara's incredible commitment to her daughter, Kimberleigh, her granddaughter, Pami, and all of the members of her family. While her work at the paper may be a great love of Barbara's, it pales in comparison to her love of family. Barbara's family is her source of strength and inspiration, now and always.

On a personal level, I will miss reading Barbara's daily reporting. I made a habit of looking for her byline. She has always shown a keen insight into not only southern West Virginia but also statewide and national issues. Her instincts, her institutional knowledge, and her commentary have always caused me, like so many others, to stop and think and to consider alternate approaches. Her commitment to the greater good in society is something for each of us to emulate.

I have often said that as long as there is a forum in which questions can be asked by men and women who do not stand in awe of a chief executive and one can speak as long as one's feet will allow one to stand, the liberties of the American people will be secure. That forum is this Senate. But the same can be said of the news media—the newspapers, radio stations, television stations, and other outlets that provide information that is important to the lives of all Americans. Freedom of the press is a key of this Republic. Without it, the American people can be led to disaster without so much as a whisper. Their freedoms can be trampled; their rights can be subverted.

Barbara Hawkins defended that freedom. She exercised it every single day. And all of us are better for her work.

I thank Barbara for her many years of service to the people of West Virginia and wish her well in the challenges that certainly are ahead of her in her life's journey.

NEVADA'S STATE HEALTH INSURANCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to commend Marilyn Wills, the director of Nevada's State Health Insurance Assistance Program, for her efforts during the implementation of the Medicare drug program in my State. I would like to recognize Marilyn for not only her service to Nevada's Medicare beneficiaries, but also for her dedication to her profession and her contributions to the community.

As most of us have surely heard from beneficiaries, the enrollment period for the new drug program was a time of great stress, confusion, and frustration. As seniors, people with disabilities, and their loved ones tried to understand the complicated new drug benefit, decide whether to sign up, and then find the best drug plan to join, many found themselves overwhelmed. And with the May 15 enrollment deadline looming, it became increasingly clear that the public needed better information and better help using that information.

I commend Nevada's State Health Insurance Assistance Program, or SHIP, for heeding this call in my State. Hundreds of SHIP volunteers gave their time and energy to counsel their fellow Nevadans about the new Medicare drug benefit, as well as other components of Medicare, supplemental health insurance, and long-term care. As more Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and friends turned to Nevada SHIP for one-on-one counseling and assistance, SHIP volunteers were eventually responding to over 1,000 phone calls every month. Nevada SHIP also made arrangements for homebound seniors and held outreach events for the community at large. During one 3-day event alone, over 500 Nevadans with Medicare received help from SHIP volunteers. The work of Nevada's SHIP volunteers is truly a testament to the value of public service.

As the director of Nevada's SHIP, Marilyn Wills was at the center of its operations. In that role, she was charged with a wide range of responsibilities, including overseeing the outreach events, giving educational presentations to the public, and training new volunteers. Moreover, Marilyn and the SHIP volunteers had to carry out their work in an environment that is continually evolving with new, uncertain, or changing program rules and details. The manner with which Marilyn carried out her responsibilities has earned her high praise from her colleagues, as well.

In one of many glowing stories about Marilyn that has reached my desk, one says, "Marilyn worked tirelessly to ensure that all the community groups working on Part D outreach were aware of every event and that this was an inclusive effort. She believes in maximizing efforts to reach the entire community, but her passion focuses on every individual beneficiary and how to

help each person get the help they need." The observer continues to write, "She made sure her volunteers knew this was about people helping people. It was important to her that the volunteers and staff feel good about what they were doing, and always see how they were truly helping people that needed the information, or just the human contact to help them be comfortable in understanding all the options."

The challenge was to inform the citizens of the State of Nevada about the new Medicare drug benefit and to guide them through the enrollment process. It is my pleasure to recognize Marilyn Wills and the Nevada SHIP volunteers for their success in tackling this challenge. They are a credit to all of us working toward the success of the new Medicare drug benefit in Nevada.

RECOGNITION OF GARRETT HALL AND CHRIS SHEA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to commend Garrett Hall and Chris Shea, fellow Nevadans who deserve praise for their efforts during the implementation of the new Medicare Part D drug benefit in Nevada.

As most of us have surely heard, the enrollment period was a time of great stress, confusion, and frustration for nearly everyone involved. As seniors, people with disabilities, and their loved ones tried to understand the complicated new drug benefit, decide whether to sign up, and then find the best drug plan to join, many found themselves overwhelmed. Emerging from those reports were also stories about pharmacists who struggled with the numerous implementation problems.

Garrett and Chris, who operate PAX Rx in Reno, NV, are fine examples of pharmacists across the country who did their best to assist those seeking their help and advice. However, Garrett and Chris did more than simply rise to the occasion. By all accounts, they went above and beyond the minimum bar set for them.

For one particularly vulnerable group, the Medicare-Medicaid dual eligible beneficiaries, Garrett and Chris came to the rescue countless times to ensure that they did not fall through the bureaucratic cracks. As many of us know, newspapers widely reported the numerous implementation problems that threatened to keep these dual-eligible beneficiaries from receiving their vitally important medications. Garrett and Chris know that there are real lives behind these facts and statistics because their PAX Rx pharmacy repeatedly intervened on behalf of affected customers. At no cost to such beneficiaries, they provided the needed medications, either by mail or hand delivery.

These two Nevadans' contributions extended beyond the scope of their pharmacy practice. Garrett and Chris also attended townhall meetings and